

VZCZCXRO7445

PP RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHDA RUEHDBU RUEHDF RUEHFL RUEHIK RUEHKW RUEHLA
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DE RUEHSL #0189 1131434
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 231434Z APR 09
FM AMEMBASSY BRATISLAVA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2460
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHCH/AMEMBASSY CHISINAU 0052
RUEHKV/AMEMBASSY KYIV 0055
RUEHVB/AMEMBASSY ZAGREB 0216

UNCLAS BRATISLAVA 000189

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/ERA, EUR/CE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [EUN](#) [PGOV](#) [UP](#) [SY](#) [MD](#) [LO](#)

SUBJECT: GAERC: SLOVAKIA SUPPORTS DIALOGUE WITH EASTERN
NEIGHBORS

REF: J.GIAQUE 4/20 E-MAIL

¶1. (SBU) Summary. Poloff discussed ref points on the April 27-28 GAERC meeting with European Correspondent Albin Otruba on April 23. The discussion of Ukraine and Moldova, which will be held in the context of the Eastern Partnership, is the most interesting for Slovakia. Slovakia supports continuous dialogue with all of its eastern neighbors, including Belarus. Otruba said Iran will not be the subject of discussions, but will be mentioned in the conclusions. FM Lajcak plans to consult with his EU colleagues on the April 29-30 visit to Slovakia of Syrian President Asad. End summary.

EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

¶2. (SBU) Slovakia will support EU financial assistance to Ukraine, albeit with concrete conditions to ensure the money goes where it is needed. Otruba said it is in Slovakia's interest and the EU's that Ukraine be stabilized - financially, politically and in terms of security.

¶3. (SBU) On Moldova, Otruba said no one can be happy with the results of recent elections, but dialogue must continue nonetheless. The EU needs to be actively engaged with both the government and the opposition in Moldova, and must strive to be trusted by both sides.

¶4. (SBU) Otruba regretted that it is necessary to invite Lukashenka to the Prague summit, but - as with Moldova - it is more important to keep the country involved than to punish individual bad guys. "The EU must be present and influential with all of our eastern neighbors," said Otruba.

CROATIA

¶5. (SBU) Slovakia is "very unhappy" that Slovenia has brought a bilateral dispute with Croatia into the accession discussion so late in the game. Otruba described the situation as "unpleasant," and said it is particularly difficult for Slovakia since they are accustomed to excellent relations with both countries. Otruba said Slovakia would try to remain neutral in this GAERC meeting since he believes other, more influential countries, are prepared to take the lead in pressuring Slovenia to separate its bilateral dispute from the accession process.

MIDDLE EAST

¶6. (SBU) Otruba said the Middle East will be discussed, and Slovak Foreign Minister Lajcak plans to speak about the April 29-30 visit of Syrian President Asad to Slovakia with his European colleagues. Otruba believes Slovakia can be a trusted intermediary between Syria and "the big western

states." Otruba said that Slovakia will encourage Syria to endorse the Arab Peace Process and normalize its relations with Lebanon. (Comment: It wasn't clear if the discussion on the Middle East would be formal or on the margins. End comment.)
EDDINS